

OPEN THE CONVERSATION

Take some time to build relationships with the students:

- Ask for each student's high and low from the week.
- Today's RBQ (Relationship Building Question): Would you rather watch your favorite sports team win a close game that comes down to the last few seconds or watch your team win easily?

INTRODUCTION

If you've been watching your favorite sport on TV, there's a difference between watching a game live and watching it after the game has already happened and you know who won. If you're watching live and your team is in a close game, you may be nervous because you don't know how things are going to end. If you already know the final score, however, you can watch the exact same game completely differently. You can sit back and relax because you already know who won.

Just because you know the final outcome of the game doesn't mean the ups and downs of the game didn't happen. It just means the mistakes and struggles look different when you already know that victory is coming.

We don't know how everything in our lives is going to turn out. There are things we hope for, things we pray for, and dreams we have. And yes, there will be hardships and struggles along the way.

But as Christians, we ultimately know how the story ends. Good will triumph over evil. Sin and death will not have the final say. Jesus will.

Revelation 19 gives us a picture of this victory. Jesus appears as the victorious King, heaven celebrates, and the forces opposing God are defeated.

READ REVELATION 19:1-10

1. Those in heaven are celebrating what God has done. How can we recognize and celebrate what God is doing in our own lives?

2. John describes God's people as a bride preparing for a wedding celebration with Jesus. What does that tell us about the future celebration God has prepared for His people?

READ REVELATION 19:11-16

3. What description of Jesus here jumps out to you? What does it show you about who Jesus is?
4. Jesus is King and completely in control. How can remembering this affect the way we live when something feels overwhelming?

READ REVELATION 19:17-21

5. How should knowing that Jesus is ultimately victorious affect the way we not only follow Him, but also talk to others about Him in our lives?

WRAP UP

This week, when you feel anxious about something or you're not sure how something important may turn out, remind yourself that Jesus is still King and Lord of all.

Take a moment to share prayer requests and pray together.

EXTENDED CUT

Revelation 19 begins after the fall of Babylon. Babylon isn't simply the ancient city in this part of Revelation. While John's first readers may have had Rome in mind, Babylon also represents the evil and corrupt power in the world that opposes God and His people.

At the beginning of chapter 19, a large crowd in heaven begins shouting "Hallelujah," which means "Praise Yahweh" or "Praise the Lord." They're celebrating God's salvation and His judgment against injustice and evil. God has stood up for His people.

The celebration, though, isn't about enjoying the suffering of others. The people in heaven praise God because His judgment is true and right. The evil in the world has hurt people, led others away from God, and opposed His people. There is celebration over the fact that God will not allow that to continue forever.

The twenty-four elders and the four living creatures appear again and worship God. Then John hears another large crowd celebrating because the Lord reigns and the marriage of the Lamb has come.

The bride represents the church, the people of God. John uses the picture of a wedding and a feast to describe the future Christ has prepared for all those who belong to Him. In the Old Testament, Isaiah 25 gives a similar picture of God preparing a feast, defeating death, and wiping away the tears of His people.

Verse 9 says that those invited to the marriage feast of the Lamb are blessed. After so much of Revelation has focused on suffering, persecution, and judgment, John now gives us a picture of joy and celebration with God's people celebrating with Christ. At the end of this section, John falls down to worship the angel speaking to him. The angel immediately stops him and tells him to worship God instead. Only God is worthy of our worship.

In verse 11, John sees heaven open and Jesus riding a white horse. This isn't the same rider we saw back in Revelation 6. John makes clear who this rider is through the names he gives Him. Jesus is called "Faithful and True," "the Word of God," and "King Kings and Lord of lords." John also sees Jesus wearing many crowns, representing His authority and power. Earlier in Revelation, Satan and the beast are pictured with crowns of their own, but none of their authority compares with that of Christ. A sword also comes from Jesus's mouth, pointing to the power of His Word.

The Gospels show Jesus as compassionate and gentle, the One who forgives, heals, welcomes children, and gives new life to sinners. Here, Jesus is shown as King and Judge, the One who has authority over every ruler and every power. The same Jesus who gave His life for us is also the One John calls King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

The final section describes the defeat of the beast and the armies standing against God. John describes birds gathering for a feast, using language similar to Ezekiel 39 where God defeats armies that have opposed Him.

The marriage feast earlier in the chapter is a celebration for God's people. The scene in verses 17-21 is very different. Those who continue to oppose God now face His judgment. The beast and false prophet we've seen earlier in Revelation are defeated and thrown into the lake of fire. The armies cannot stand against Christ. There is never any doubt about who will win this battle.

Revelation doesn't treat evil as something God will ignore forever. God is loving, yes. But God is also just, and the choices we make about whether to follow Christ matter. We are all in need of the grace and salvation that Jesus provides. Knowing that Christ will ultimately judge evil should give us a greater desire for other people to know Him and the love and salvation He freely gives.

1. Those in heaven are celebrating what God has done. How can we recognize and celebrate what God is doing in our own lives?
It's easy to get so focused on what's coming next that we forget to stop and recognize what God has already done. We can recognize and show gratitude to God by pausing

and thanking Him for what He has done in our lives and for what He will continue to do. We can thank him for who we are; the gifts & talents he's given us and for loved ones we have in our lives. And we can celebrate God by participating in worship and praising Him for who He is and all He has done.

2. John describes God's people as a bride preparing for a wedding celebration with Jesus. What does that tell us about the future celebration God has prepared for His people?
John gives us a picture full of joy and celebration. Just as a wedding is a celebration of the future ahead, those who belong to Christ have a future with Him to look forward to. The sin, suffering, and death of this world will not last forever.

3. What description of Jesus here jumps out to you? What does it show you about who Jesus is?
Some may say "Faithful and True," which reminds us that Jesus is who He says He is and will do what He says He will do. Someone may say "the Word of God," which connects back to the way John described Jesus at the beginning of his Gospel as the very expression and revelation of God. Someone may say "King of kings and Lord of lords" as a reminder that no power or ruler exists above Christ.

4. Jesus is King and completely in control. How can remembering this affect the way we live when something feels overwhelming?
Remembering who Jesus is doesn't mean we will never feel overwhelmed, anxious, or worried. It is a helpful reminder that regardless of what we are facing, we can trust God even when we don't know exactly how things will turn out.

5. How should knowing that Jesus is ultimately victorious affect the way we not only follow Him, but also talk to others about Him in our lives?
Knowing that Jesus ultimately triumphs over sin and death can give us reassurance when we are going through a tough time. It can give us perseverance to continuing following Christ regardless of what life may bring. It can also help us talk to others who may be struggling or simply may not know Jesus. As we become more confident in who Jesus is and remember that this broken world full of sin, sickness, and death will not have the final word, it can give us confidence to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with those around us. Living with this knowledge should give us the desire for others to have the same hope and salvation we have in Christ.